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Women *In the Cut* of Danger: Female Subjectivity, Unregimented Masculinity and the
Pleasure/Danger Symbiosis from the Gothic Romance to the Erotic Thriller

*In the cut. From vagina. A place to hide. To hedge your bet. But someplace safe,
someplace free from harm.*

- Susanna Moore, *In the Cut*, 178-179, 2003

The fact is I am getting a little afraid of John.

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Yellow Wallpaper', 16, 2009

Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) is one of the foremost Gothic Romances of the twentieth century. This enduringly popular novel has rarely been out of print since its original publication; has inspired rewritings and sequels by writers such as Susan Hill, Maureen Freely and Sally Beauman;¹ and was influential in the development of a whole new genus of mass-market Gothic fiction in the 1950s and 1960s, which often announced itself as being 'in the Du Maurier tradition' or 'in the Gothic tradition of Rebecca' (Russ 1973: 666). Owing to its reputation as *the* paradigmatic example of the Gothic Romance genre, this article compares Du Maurier's text to Susanna Moore's 1995 novel, *In the Cut*, in order to investigate what I shall henceforth refer to as the phenomenon of 'genre dissolution', which is heavily implicated in the relationship between social and literary form. Indeed, in *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976), Terry Eagleton argues that the development of new narrative genres, or other 'significant developments in literary form [...] result from significant changes in ideology. They embody new ways of perceiving

social reality and [...] new relationships between artist and audience' (2002: 23). Eagleton's observation, however, surely presupposes its opposing circumstance: that when a particular genre experiences a significant decline in popularity, disintegrates, or, in some sense, 'dies out', this must *also* be owing to further changes taking place collectively at the level of society. This is the position taken up by Franco Moretti in his 1980 essay on detective fiction, 'Clues', which analyses the genre by way of combining 'structural' and 'functional' critical approaches (2005a: 130). The former is essentially a structuralist method which positions the subject under scrutiny (in his case, the literary genre of detective fiction) as a closed system to be examined as conponential structure in itself. In contrast, what Moretti terms 'functional' analysis is, to some degree, a sociological approach, which positions the genre as a singular component *within* a larger social system. This approach is therefore not so concerned with the textual construction of the detective story, but more so with the question of the *function* that this particular genre plays within wider social organisations. In doing this, Moretti, much like Eagleton, ultimately makes the case for a relationship that exists between social and literary form. What is most illuminating about this proposed correlation between 'the structure of the text and [...] the vaster system in which that text is integrated' (2005a: 134), is that it therefore conceivable that every genre eventually 'exhausts its potentialities', meaning that the genre's 'inner form is no longer capable of representing the most significant aspects of contemporary reality. At which point either the genre loses its form under the impact of reality' (Moretti 2005b: 17), or it otherwise 'betrays' the reality it purports to represent in order to carry on the tradition of the form. In light of this hypothesis, this article seeks to investigate to what extent Moretti's theory of the inevitable genre

dissolution is true, *specifically* with regards to the Gothic Romance. After establishing the constituent conventions of the genre through the exemplary example of Du Maurier's *Rebecca*, ultimately, the purpose of this article is to assess the degree to which Moore's *In the Cut*, as contemporary novel of Gothic-inflection by a female author, is heavily indebted to the Gothic Romance, and therefore may be interpreted as a *continuation* of the genre, and conversely, the means through which Moore's novel exhibits an overt and defiant *resistance* to the Gothic Romance, thereby signifying the genre's 'loss of form' within contemporary fiction.

The 'romance plot' is the one of the most fundamental narrative arcs on which fictional works are structured. This plotline is constituted by three principal (though deceptively simple) events: girl meets boy; girl loses boy; girl and boy make up, get married (if not already married) and live happily ever after.² Although within the contemporary literary scene, the romance plot is most characteristically associated with mass-market publications by companies belonging to the Canadian publishing conglomerate, Harlequin Enterprises, canonical echoes of the romance plot exist very overtly in the works of Jane Austen and, furthermore, the plotline has arguable canonical provenance in Samuel Richardson's 1740 text *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*. The 'Gothic Romance', sometimes still referred to by the now rather outmoded descriptor, the 'Novel of Romantic Suspense', is a particular variant of this most basic of narratives, in which the second stage of the plot ('girl loses boy') is facilitated through the female protagonist's suspicion and/or discovery of the hero's capacity to harm her. Like its more general counterpart, the Gothic Romance possesses founding texts that are now part of the

literary canon, including the novels of Ann Radcliffe and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). However, as previously mentioned, the genre most notably flourished between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s, owing in large part to the publishing company Ace Books, who printed mass-market 'drugstore Gothics' by writers such as Victoria Holt, Anne Maybury and Dorothy Eden from 1952 until 1972.³ Gothic fiction is renowned for its transfiguration of the family unit and the domestic home from sites of love and protection into ones of anxiety and horror. It is therefore not surprising that the Gothic Romance can be 'stripped back' to the basic narrative formula of '*Somebody's trying to kill me and I think it's my husband*', as Joanna Russ has humorously done in her influential article of the same name (1973: 666).

Narrated by a timid young woman who is pathologically insecure of herself – a girl who frets over broken figurines, has a *penchant* for fingernail biting and is 'someone to be petted from time to time [...] but more often forgotten, more often patted on the shoulder and told to run away and play' (Du Maurier 2007: 219-220) – Du Maurier's *Rebecca* establishes itself as a Gothic Romance in its portrayal of the feminine experience of domestic life as 'a nightmare space, with a house full of dark secrets and threatening scenarios' (Horner and Zlosnik 1998: 102). Russ foregrounds the significance of the role played by domestic dwellings within Gothic Romance novels when she insists that a prerequisite of a genre is the heroine's move 'to a large, lonely, brooding *House* (always named)' (1973: 667). The anthropomorphised architectural structure is a convention of Gothic fiction stretching as far back as Horace Walpole's seminal novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Russ' observation regarding the 'naming' of houses is therefore

significant, as to 'name' as house is, in sense, to perform an act of anthropomorphism. In *Rebecca*, this house is Manderley, the estate to which wealthy widower Maxim de Winter brings his new bride (the novel's unnamed narrator) after their impromptu wedding. In *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (1994), Anne Williams considers the way in which the Freudian typology of the mind can be 'mapped out' of against the architecture of the domestic home, resulting in particular areas of psychic equivalence. She suggests that by 'building walls and declaring boundaries [...] a house makes secrets in merely being itself, for its function is to enclose spaces. And the larger, older and more complex the structure becomes, the more likely it is to have secret or forgotten rooms' (1994: 44). Whilst those rooms associated with daily living can be seen to represent the conscious mind, the 'forgotten' or otherwise marginalised spaces of the house correspond to the unconsciousness and to repressed desires, thus easily translating into sites of terror. In *Rebecca*, it is the West Wing of Manderley that is figured as this secreted space. As the narrator comments whilst being shown her East Wing bedroom by the intimidating housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, 'I did not know why she must speak to me with such an undercurrent of resentment, implying [...] that this room, where I found myself to be installed [...] [was] a second rate room, as it were, for a second rate person' (Du Maurier 2007: 83). As the novel progresses, it is discovered by the narrator that the West Wing is where Maxim's first wife, the titular Rebecca, used to have her bedroom, and is warned by her husband from entering this space. Because of the novel positions Rebecca so securely as the epitome of female licentiousness, the 'forbidden' West Wing of Manderley may thus be interpreted as a manifestation of society's active repression of aggressive female sexuality. Therefore, in the narrator's entering into this divided and

hazardous space (Rebecca's bedroom, but also, by logical extension, the house at Manderley and her marriage to Maxim itself), the Gothic Romance, as Ann B. Tracy suggests, often illustrates that 'impulsive marriage is nearly as perilous as being kidnapped' (1998: 106).

Furthermore, the 'secrets' concealed within Manderley as an architectural space are compounded by the secrets held by the novel's 'hero' himself. Maxim, with his 'dark tortured eyes' and 'pale drawn face' (Du Maurier 2007: 297), is a character securely in the cast of the Brontëan incarnation of the Gothic hero, combining elements of both Heathcliff and Edward Rochester. Judy Simmons summarises Maxim as 'tall, dark and handsome, cultivated, restless, well-travelled, sexually experienced, and harbouring a sinister secret' (1998: 114). Moreover, as Russ insists, the Gothic Romance narrative culminates in a pivotal scene which witnesses the revelation *of* that dark and threatening secret: 'it turns out to be immoral and usually criminal activity on somebody's part centering around money and/or the Other Woman's ghastly (usually sexual) misbehaviour' (1973: 669). The crucial revelation in *Rebecca* is that of Maxim's murder of his first wife. He confesses to the narrator that 'There was never any accident. Rebecca was not drowned. I killed her. I shot Rebecca in the cottage on the cove' (Du Maurier 2007: 298). Maxim's murderous actions illustrate the way in which Du Maurier's novel transfigures the husband character from a 'protector' into an aggressive and dangerous masculine 'other', which precisely what Russ identifies as being the chief cognitive element of the Gothic Romance. However, I would go further than this to propose that it is actually the way in which the *female* protagonist responds to the possibility of violent and unregimented masculinity that, above all else, *embodies* the genre in its totality.

Indeed, in order to make her understand his motives for killing Rebecca, Maxim performs a recitation of the wickedness and sexual profligacy of his first bride: ‘She was vicious, damnable, rotten through and through. We never loved each other; never had one moment of happiness together [...] She was not even normal’ (Du Maurier 2007: 304). The result of this denouncement of Rebecca is that, instead of greeting the shocking disclosure with the expected horror and fear over her own safety, the narrator instead exhibits an aberrant sense of relief, understanding and support for her husband. Thus, the prevailing syntax structuring both *Rebecca* (as a singular example) and the Gothic Romance as a genre at large is essentially a pleasure/danger symbiosis manifested in a preoccupation with the perpetually half-transgressed boundary between the abhorrent and the desirable in relation to masculinity.

Since its very inception, the Gothic has always possessed a pronounced generic instability and an inherent level of formal hybridity (Horner and Zlosnik 2005: 3-4). As a generically unstable or ‘slippery’ novel, Susanna Moore’s *In the Cut* certainly exemplifies this quality of Gothic. Indeed, on one hand Moore’s novel exhibits some striking similarities with a Gothic Romance novel on both surface and thematic levels. Firstly, in the same way that the narrator of *Rebecca* is only ever identified as ‘Mrs. de Winter’, *In the Cut* is also narrated by a female subject that is somehow incomplete. In the latter case, this narrator is the surnameless Frannie, a thirty-something creative writing teacher at a New York university, who becomes embroiled in the hunt for a serial killer who is brutally murdering women in her neighbourhood. Secondly, the heroines of both novels experience sporadic periods of identification with an image of improper ‘bad

girl', femininity. Thus, just as Mrs. de Winter is intimidated by, yet has the desire to *become* just like her predecessor (which, of course, she manages to do following Maxim's confession, finally standing up to Mrs. Danvers and taking on the authority fitting on the Mistress of a country estate), in Moore's novel, *Angela Sands*, a murdered prostitute, possesses a strange, rampaging hold over Frannie's imagination. Indeed, it is Angela who establishes Frannie's connection to the murder cases when it is discovered that she was the last person to see Angela alive when she witnessed her performing fellatio on a man hidden by shadows, who can only be identified by a tattoo on the inside of his left wrist. Thirdly, the narrative momentum of both *Rebecca* and *In the Cut* is centred on the attempt by the heroine to forge a relationship with an enigmatic and potentially dangerous man in possession of an unsettling capacity for violence. In Moore's novel, following her initial questioning over the murder of Angela Sands, Frannie soon enters into an intense and hedonistic sexual relationship with James Malloy, one of the homicide detectives working on the case: a man who, much like the murderous Maxim de Winter, is 'suavely brutal' (Auerbach 2000: 107). Indeed, in placing their female narrators in role of detective with regards to the suspected secrets held by the novels' brooding heroes, both texts, as Horner and Zlosnik write of *Rebecca*, show 'how, and at what cost, the transition between ignorance and knowledge is made in the female subject' (1998:103).

However, because of its generic instability, *In the Cut* can be understood in terms of various other genres. The novel is sometimes referred to as a work of detective fiction, or a 'serial killer novel', however, as various reviews produced shortly after novel's publication suggest, is most commonly understood to be an 'erotic thriller'.⁴ In what

could almost be a tailored description of Moore's novel itself, Nina K. Martin observes that 'Two primary components – erotic sex and suspenseful thrills – combine to create the erotic thriller genre, a contemporary soft-core pornography that, as opposed to hard-core, male orientated porn, deals specifically with the sexual subjectivity of women and the social construction of gender' (2003: 2). In terms of the social enactment of gender, *In the Cut* demonstrates a probing interest with the ways in which women are constructed across multiple levels of human existence, even right down to the level of language itself. As part of a research paper, Frannie is currently compiling of a dictionary of New York street slang, much of which either refers to women in terms of consumption, such as 'brasole, n., vagina (from the Sicilian? *bresaola*? cured meat?)' (Moore 2003: 54), or is in other ways reductive towards women. Specifically in relation to Gothic representations of gender, Moore's novel undoubtedly exhibits the genre's preoccupation with a feminine identity rendered unstable, resulting in the possible loss of bodily and psychological integrity. In imagery redolent of the lolling, fractured heads of women that permeate Charlotte Perkins Gillman's Gothic story 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892), it is highly significant the murder victims in the Moore's text are being 'disarticulated' (Moore 2003: 19). Indeed, whilst within the context of the novel itself this is a purely technical term used by police detectives to describe the separation of bones at their joints, this image of a mutilated female physiognomy bears wider connotations of the stifling, silencing and disempowerment of women on a much wider scale, which is a major anxiety often articulated via the Gothic mode.

However, despite sharing with the Gothic Romance a preoccupation with the threat posed to female subjectivity by dark and malign forces, the frequent, explicit, and

often violent sexual content of *In the Cut* is one of the most overt signs of the novel's departure from the more traditional Gothic Romance genre. As Ann Snitow comments, although sex is, in a sense, the *raison d'être* of the romance novel (Gothic or otherwise), sexual encounters within this genre are 'diffused, always *implied* rather than *enacted*' (1984: 269, my emphasis). For example, even within a novel such as *Rebecca*, as a Gothically-inflected variant of the romance genre, dealing with so-called 'transgressive', non-heteronormative sexual experiences – Rebecca's quasi-incestuous relationship with her cousin, Jack Favell, and the possibility of her having had a lesbian relationship with Mrs. Danvers (the presumable connotations of Rebecca being 'not even normal') – these experiences are never performed within the narrative itself, but rather they are *displaced* onto the disturbing, oddly sexualised imagery of the beach and gardens at Manderley (See Simmons 1998: 118-119). *In the Cut*, by contrast, presents the reader with ferociously unreserved sexual descriptions:

He put his tongue inside of me, in my vagina, in my ass, and then lifted my hips and turned me so I was on my back, my legs over the side of the bed, bent at the knee, and he kneeled on the floor, his fingers inside of me, too, hooked deep inside, the way a man carries something hooked on a finger over his shoulder, and he sucked my clitoris into his mouth (Moore 2003: 79).

James Annesley notes the controversy surrounding Moore's novel as arising predominantly from its insistence of female masochism: its depiction of a woman's 'enjoyment of brutalising sexual experiences' (1998: 41). The modification to gender

relations and social structures brought about by feminist activity throughout the twentieth century cannot be overestimated. Indeed, it could be suggested that in the 1990s when Moore's novel was first published, mainstream Anglo-American society had entered into the age of what is contentiously termed 'postfeminism': a late twentieth-century school of feminist discourse based on the notion that the struggle for full civil and legal equality (often referred to as 'equality feminism') had already been achieved earlier in the century, and thus focuses instead on issues of victimisation, self-government and social accountability. Thus, specifically in relation to sexual conduct, because postfeminism is 'critical of any definition of women as victims who are unable to control their own lives, it is inclined to be unwilling to condemn pornography' or other explicit representations of sexual activity (Gamble 2001: 36), such as those that dominate the pages of *In the Cut*. More specifically, Moore's novel suggests the influence of a particular subset of the more general postfeminist movement: that which Tad Friend has termed "'do me" feminism' (1994: 48). Whilst a more radical feminist position, particularly fashionable with thinkers such as Catherine MacKinnon in the 1970s, views sexual relations between men and women as fundamentally underscored by the *threat* of rape (thus merely an extension of male dominance and supremacy), "'Do me" feminism' instead espouses female empowerment and agency through heteronormative sexual experience and experimentation. This is precisely what is demonstrated through Frannie's relationship with Malloy: a relationship which is portrayed as affording Frannie the opportunity to explore her own sexual agency and to partake in sexual activities to which she has hereto never experienced, including anal sex, exhibitionism and the use of handcuffs.

Further differences between Moore's novel and the earlier *Rebecca* can be seen to reside in the function performed by architecture in both texts. As opposed to the Gothic Romance's entwining of architectural structures with the *psychological* experiences of their inhabitants, *In the Cut* figures domestic dwellings much more as *bodily* metaphors. Frannie, for example, resides on the third floor of a converted Brownstone overlooking Washington Square in New York City and informs the reader that, 'As I have no doorman, and my parsimonious landlord pretends there is no intercom system because it would ruin the design of the nineteenth-century front hall, it is impossible to control what my landlord calls the ingresses and egresses of the house' (Moore 2003: 11). Thus, whilst her actual living quarters may be a 'locked, female space' structured around Frannie's dreams and sexual fantasies (Thornham 2007: 37), its foyer is open to the outside world, indivisible from the public space of the street, and is, throughout the text, repeatedly infiltrated by male intruders.⁵ Frannie's apartment, therefore, is situated as a rather unambiguous metaphor for her own body. This is most evident when Frannie is left a rubber hand by an anonymous visitor outside her apartment door and then, little over a hundred pages later, during an impromptu sexual encounter, Frannie informs the reader that Malloy 'pulled down my underpants and pushed his finger, fingers, all of his fingers inside me' (Moore 2003: 119). Thus, although *In the Cut* shares with the Gothic Romance the transformation of the home into the *unheimlich*, the novel arguably has more in common with 'horror' texts such as *The Castle of Otranto* or Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), in which violence directed towards women is tangible and bodily, as opposed to novels of 'terror', such as *Rebecca*, in which violence is incarnated as

emotional and psychological abuse (the narrator of *Rebecca*, for all the torment she does endure, is never actually placed in a situation of bodily harm).

Moreover, whereas *Rebecca* subscribes heavily to the Brontëan, ruralised Gothic of wild, anthropomorphised landscapes, *In the Cut* is a work of ‘Urban Gothic’, a sub-genre, which, as Alexandra Warwick explains, seeks to express ‘the alienation of the urban subject, leading to paranoia, fragmentation and loss of identity’ (1998: 289). Indeed, one way in which textual representations of the city imbue their urban environments with an inherent Gothicism is through the metaphor of the city as a *doppelgänger* of itself. Cities are thus often conceived of as ‘doubled’ and divided spaces, and New York City as presented by *In the Cut* is no exception. In order to keep herself safe, Frannie prefers to keep herself to ‘my side of [Washington] Square’, meaning the fashionable neighbourhood of Greenwich Village (Moore 2003: 11). The city thereby exhibits an apparent north/south divide, in which, as you progress further south towards the Brooklyn Bridge, you risk entering more dangerous, ‘barbaric’ territory. Indeed, when Frannie is attacked whilst out walking, Malloy scolds her insisting, ‘I’m surprised only one guy tried to jump you. Walking on West Broadway!’ (Moore 2003: 75). The city also possesses a temporal duality, due to the fact that the city goes out of the individual’s ownership at night-time, and thus the urban subject (no longer confident and in charge of their surroundings) is made to feel uncanny towards themselves within their own city. Indeed, when questioned by Malloy over a neighbour’s reports of screams in a nearby street, Frannie makes the sad observation that ‘There are screams almost every night in MacDougal Alley’ (Moore 2003: 23). Thus, as a text that depicts a sexually motivated serial killer within a Gothicised-urban space, *In the Cut*, as

Sue Thornham suggests, offers a 'very different vision of *sex* and *the city*' than the 'safe' and 'feminised' representation of New York City in the television and movie series bearing that name (2007: 34-34).

At the novel's close, having seen a tattoo on his wrist that suggests Malloy to be the killer, Frannie convinces him to allow himself to be handcuffed to a chair, straddles him to orgasm, and then flees her apartment in terror. Arguably, it is this scene of a woman's barely-clothed, terrified flight from a domestic dwelling into the dark of night in which *In the Cut* most resembles a Gothic Romance (See Martin 2003: 82). Thus, the narrative premise of the novel is not so much '*Somebody's trying to kill me and I think it's my husband*', but rather it has been contemporised to become '*Somebody's trying to kill me and I think it's this guy I'm having casual sex with*'. Despite this similarity, however, I must also insist that this is also the point at which the convergences between the two novels end. As Gothic Romances such as *Rebecca* demonstrate, there are certain actions required of the heroine in order to satisfy the narrative requirements of the genre. Indeed, above all else, it is an absolute prerequisite that the heroine of a Gothic Romance *must* 'penetrate disguises – spot the plausible seeming villains, trust the suspicious looking heroes' (Tracy 1998: 104). This is precisely what Frannie *fails* to accomplish at the close of *In the Cut*, as, having fled Malloy, Frannie and is unwittingly propelled into the clutches of the real killer: Malloy's partner, Detective Rodriguez. Indeed, Tracy notes the double meaning of the term 'escapist' – often applied to the Gothic Romance in a disparaging sense – by claiming that the genre 'may owe its devoted following and endless appeal to the most extraordinary thing that its heroines do: against all statistics and possibility, they escape' (1998: 107). This is certainly true of *Rebecca*, as, although

there is a penance or 'price' to be paid in terms of money, property and, by extension, social status, the fire that engulfs Manderley, killing the horrifying Mrs. Danvers, in a sense *exorcises* the transgressive figure of Rebecca from the narrative. Thus, all ties to his nefarious past having been severed, Maxim and the narrator are free to live, as the cliché suggests, 'happily ever after'. Frannie, in contrast, suffers a rather different fate from the traditional Gothic heroine. Rodriguez drives Frannie to an abandoned lighthouse that is both 'gaudy and obvious' in its evocation of phallic dominance (Thornham 2003: 40), where he attacks her with a blade, making incisions on her arms, her breasts and her vagina. On the final page of the novel Frannie's death is signified through a strange disturbance in narrative subjectivity:

There is an essay on the language of the dying. The dying sometimes speak of themselves in the third person. I was not speaking that way. I said: I am bleeding. I am going to bleed to death. And I will be lucky if I die before he returns. [...]
You know, they did not print the whole of that Indian song in the subway. [...]
But I know the poem.

"It's off in the distance. It came into the room. It's here in the circle."

I know the poem.

She knows the poem (Moore 2003: 180).

In conclusion, despite a fifty-seven year gap between their publication, *Rebecca* and *In the Cut* share many similarities which, at least on first glance, suggest the Gothic Romance as neither having 'lost its form' under the influence of a changing reality, nor

sacrificed a recognisable 'realism' in order to uphold the structural requirements of the genre. Indeed, both texts are punctuated by a pleasure/danger symbiosis resulting from their respective authors' deft coalescing of a romanticised, erotic allure with elements of a treacherous Gothic narrative and, moreover, both novels are underlined by the Richardsonian formula that seduces its heroines into believing they can effectively domesticate violent and unregimented masculinity. However, once integrated in detail, I would insist that it is the *differences* between the two texts (which this article has discussed) that, if not more numerous, are certainly far more significant, and thus *do* indeed suggest the dissolution of the Gothic Romance genre across the twentieth century, thereby upholding Moretti's claim of the necessary and unavoidable disbanding of individual genres. In postfeminist societies of the Western world, if women no longer feel obligated to marry and thus are no longer dependent upon their husbands in terms of finance or property, they cannot experience a Gothic Romance (at least not in Russ' sense of the term). Women are, however, living independently within modern urban environments, that do indeed harbour the potential threats of serial rapists and killers living in anonymity. Postfeminist society therefore poses its own dangers for young women: dangers which are understandably very different from those experienced by Du Maurier's readership in the 1930s. What's more, these dangers are, to some degree, the 'significant aspects of contemporary reality' that Moore's novel seeks to represent. Ultimately, therefore, as Leslie Felperin suggests, *In the Cut*, is probably best understood as a text 'for and about "the Sex and the City generation"' (2003: 28), rather than as a contemporary Gothic Romance.

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¹ Specifically, I am referring to Susan Hill's *Mrs. de Winter* (1993), Maureen Freely's *The Other Rebecca* (1996) and Sally Beauman's *Rebecca's Tale* (2001).

² My phrasing of 'girl' before 'boy' is deliberate as the romance plot is a highly gendered narrative arc which is most typically associated with the representation of the *feminine* experience of a heterosexual relationship.

³ Some have argued that, in recent years, the Gothic Romance has experienced a prolific resurgence in the guise of vampire romances: a publishing phenomenon epitomised by the astonishing success of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series (2005-2010). It is my contention, however, that whilst novels of this kind do indeed exhibit the innocent girl/dangerous man binary characteristic of the Gothic Romance, their overt use of the

supernatural situates them far greater in the tradition of Gothic *horror*, rather than as the decedents of the Gothic Romance, which are essentially works of *terror*.

⁴ For example, the novel is referred to as an ‘erotic thriller’ in an excerpt by *Publishers Weekly* reproduced on an unnumbered page in the front of the 2003 film tie-in edition, and in an excerpt by *The New York Times Book Review* reproduced on the front cover of the 1999 paperback edition (both published by Plume).

⁵ Indeed, Frannie’s best friend, Pauline, is painfully murdered by the killer in her very own apartment.